

## AVI300 – HEALTHCARE WORKER RESPIRATORY ILLNESS OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Däkelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, syilx, and Tšilhqot’in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate, and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviors in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace include the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the duration and severity of outbreaks when they occur and prevent further transmission of illness by providing safety measures that emphasize prevention of illness via immunization and the appropriate use of other infection prevention, management, and control measures.

### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Additional Precautions:</i>	<i>Precautions (i.e., Contact Precautions, Droplet Precautions, and Airborne Precautions) that are necessary in addition to Routine Practices for certain pathogens or clinical presentations to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from patient to patient, patient to HCP, and HCP to patient. These precautions are based on the method of transmission (e.g., contact, droplet, airborne).</i>
<i>Employee</i>	<i>A person currently employed by Interior Health in a full-time, part-time, casual, and/or term-specific position.</i>
<i>Immune Status:</i>	<i>This refers to an individual's immunity through previous vaccination or infection. Without valid proof of either, an individual is considered not immune</i>
<i>Non-IH Worker</i>	<i>A healthcare worker not employed by IH but who provides patient care or works in institutions that provide patient care on behalf of IH (e.g., contracted physicians, students, volunteers, contractors, or other health authority/services employees).</i>
<i>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</i>	<i>As it applies to this policy, PPE is defined as equipment or clothing that is worn to minimize exposure to Communicable Disease. PPE acts as a barrier but does not eliminate the risk. Examples of PPE include a medical mask or a gown.</i>

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Policy Steward: Corporate Director, Workplace Health and Safety	
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<i>Point-of-Care Risk Assessment (PCRA):</i>	<i>A routine practice that should be done by Employees and Non-IH Workers prior to every interaction with a patient to assess the likelihood of exposing themselves and/or others to infectious agents. This informs the selection of appropriate actions and additional personal protective equipment (PPE).</i>
<i>Routine Practices:</i>	<i>The system of infection prevention and control practices recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada to be used with all clients/patients/residents during all care to prevent and control transmission of microorganisms in all health care settings.</i>
<i>Transmission:</i>	<i>The route by which pathogens are spread.</i>
<i>Viral Respiratory Illness (VRI):</i>	<i>Viral infection of the respiratory system. Examples include Influenza, COVID-19 and RSV.</i>

### 3.0 POLICY

3.1 This policy applies to all Employees and Non-IH Workers.

**During a declared outbreak:**

3.2 This policy supersedes regional and provincial policies at the outbreak location.

3.3 Follow this policy in conjunction with IH’s outbreak toolkits (Section 4.0), and any recommendations from the Medical Microbiologist (for acute care facilities) or the Medical Health Officer (for long-term care facilities).

3.3.1 For outbreak prevention and preparedness, refer to the Prevention and Management of Exposure to Communicable Diseases Policy ([AV0900](#)) and the Influenza Prevention Policy ([AV1350](#)).

3.4 Employees and Non-IH Workers must self-screen for symptoms of communicable disease prior to their shift and at least once partway through the shift. Both Employees and Non-IH Workers must adhere to the Prevention and Management of Exposure to Communicable Diseases Policy ([AV0900](#)) for reporting and return to work guidance.

3.5 Employees and Non-IH Workers who are unable to provide documentation of an Immune Status may be excluded from work during an outbreak. Both Employees and Non-IH Workers should review the Prevention and Management of Exposure to Communicable Diseases Policy ([AV0900](#)) for vaccine and immunity status guidance.

3.6 Employees and Non-IH Workers must maintain Routine Practices, adhere to Additional Precautions and perform Point-of-Care Risk Assessments to determine if additional Personal Protective Equipment is necessary.

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3.7 Management is responsible for monitoring compliance and implementing corrective actions where non-compliance is identified by Infection Prevention and Control or manager/supervisor.

### 4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Use the following resources for outbreak management and response:

- [Infection Prevention and Control’s Acute Care Outbreak Toolkit](#)
- [Communicable Disease Unit’s Respiratory and Gastrointestinal Infection Outbreak Toolkit: Long-Term Care](#)

### 5.0 RESOURCES

- HealthLinkBC. [Facts about influenza \(the flu\)](#).
- HealthLinkBC. [Symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- HealthLinkBC. [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) Infection](#).

### 6.0 REFERENCES

1. IH Infection Prevention and Control. [Outbreak Acute Guideline Toolkit](#).
2. Communicable Disease Unit. [Respiratory and Gastrointestinal Infection Outbreak Toolkit: Long-Term Care Facilities](#).
3. Provincial Infection Control Network of BC. [Provincial Guidance on Return to Work and Exposure Management for Health Care Workers with Viral Respiratory Illness](#)
4. [Policy AV0900](#) - Prevention and Management of Exposure to Communicable Diseases Policy
5. [Policy AV1350](#) – Influenza Immunization Prevention

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